MATHEMATICS · GRADES 4-6

Mean, median, and mode

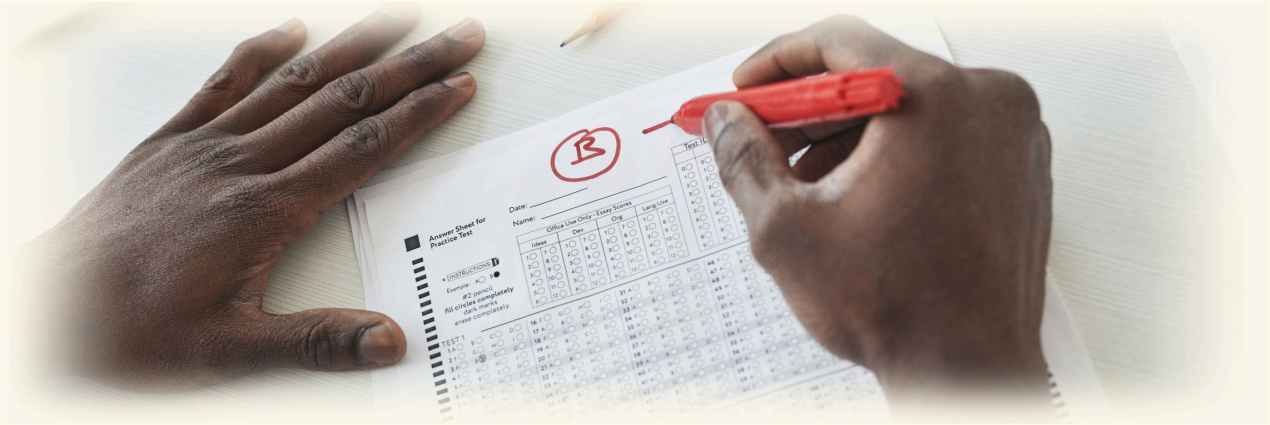
Difficulty level: Intermediate

Mathematics: Grades 4-6

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Overview of the concept

This is how you describe a typical value in a set of numbers, like the average score on a test or the most common shoe size in a class. The mean, the median, and the mode each describe typical in a different way, and together they tell you more than any one of them alone. You use them to describe test scores, house prices, or wages, and to spot when one big outlier is pulling the average away from what most people actually experience.



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Worked examples

EXAMPLE 1

Q Find the mean, median, and mode of 2, 4, 4, 6, 9.

SOLUTION

This is a mixed-measures question: one set of numbers, three answers. Start with the mean.

2 + 4 + 4 + 6 + 9 = 25

25 ÷ 5 = 5

The median is the middle value once the numbers are in order. They already are, 2, 4, 4, 6, 9, so the middle one is 4.

The mode is the value that appears most often. 4 appears twice, more than any other, so the mode is 4.

Mean 5, median 4, mode 4

EXAMPLE 2

Q Find the mean, median, and mode of 3, 5, 7, 9.

SOLUTION

There are four values, an even count, so there is no single middle value. The median is the average of the two middle ones.

3 + 5 + 7 + 9 = 24, 24 ÷ 4 = 6

(5 + 7) ÷ 2 = 6

Every value appears once, so there is no mode. Mean 6, median 6, no mode

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Practice questions

1. Three quiz scores are 4, 6, 8. Find the mean.

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2. The numbers are 3, 9, 7, 5, 11. What is the median?

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3. The shoe sizes in a class are 5, 7, 7, 7, 9. What is the mode?

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4 The points scored in five rounds are 2, 3, 3, 4, 8. Work out the mean, median, and mode.

- **A** Mean 4, median 3, mode 3
- **B** Mean 3, median 4, mode 3
- **C** Mean 4, median 4, mode 3
- **D** Mean 3, median 3, mode 4

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5 Four lap times are 4, 7, 9, 12 minutes. What is the median?

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6 The ages at a party are 3, 7, 9, 14, 21. Is there a mode?

- **A** No mode
- **B** Yes, 3
- **C** Yes, 7
- **D** Yes, 21

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7 The numbers are 2, 3, 3, 4, 8, 8. What are the modes?

- **A** 3 and 8
- **B** 3 and 4
- **C** 2 and 8
- **D** 4 and 8

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8 The daily temperatures are 7, 7, 10, 12, 15 degrees. What is the range (the difference between the largest and smallest values)?

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9 The shoe sizes in a shop are mostly 7, with a few 12s. Which measure best describes a typical size: the mean, the median, or the mode?

A The mean

B The median

C The mode

D The range

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10 **Five test scores have a mean of 10. What is their total?**

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ANSWER KEY

1. 6

2. 7

3. 7

4. Mean 4, median 3, mode 3

5. 8

6. No mode

7. 3 and 8

8. 8

9. The mode

10. 50

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